

VETERANS AFFAIRS

8950 Department of Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs has three primary objectives: (1) provide comprehensive assistance to veterans and dependents of veterans in obtaining benefits and rights to which they may be entitled under state and federal laws; (2) afford California veterans the opportunity to become homeowners through loans available to them under the Cal-Vet farm and home loan program; and (3) provide support for California veterans' homes where eligible veterans may live in a retirement community and where nursing care and hospitalization are provided. The department operates veterans' homes in Yountville (Napa County), Barstow (San Bernardino County), and Chula Vista (San Diego County). The homes provide medical care, rehabilitation, and residential home services. With \$50 million in general obligation bonds (Proposition 16, 2000), \$162 million in lease-revenue bonds (most recently amended by AB 1077 [Chapter 824, Statutes of 2004, Wesson]), and federal funds, new homes will be constructed in West Los Angeles, Lancaster, Saticoy, Fresno, and Redding.

The Governor proposes total expenditures of \$301.5 million (\$67.7 million General Fund), a decrease of \$3.0 million from the current-year budget.

Major Budget Proposals

Chula Vista Veterans' Home. The Governor proposes to convert the 52 Chula Vista residential care beds to intermediate care beds, which would allow for a higher-level of assisted care. The Administration indicates this will increase federal funds by \$2 million, decrease General Fund support by \$940,000, and require an increase of 8.4 positions.

Budget Act Appropriations. The Governor proposes to consolidate the support appropriations for the three existing veterans' homes and the headquarter operation into a single departmental organization code. The Administration indicates this is a more traditional budgetary treatment and will provide more flexibility to reallocate resources to meet emergent needs.

Northern California Veterans' Cemetery. The Governor proposes to add funding of \$446,000 (\$327,000 General Fund and \$119,000 federal funds) and 1.0 position for operations and maintenance of the new Northern California Veterans' Cemetery near Redding.

Yountville Veterans' Home. The Governor proposes to augment funding by \$832,000 on a one-time basis (\$200,000 General Fund and \$632,000 Federal Grant Fund) to replace a failed chiller at the Yountville facility.

Unallocated Budget Reduction. The Governor proposes an unallocated General Fund reduction of \$973,000.